

# KIDS' PAGE

It's not unusual to find kids who believe that science and fun belong at opposite ends of the spectrum. Why has it traditionally been so hard to get children interested in science? Perhaps it is a simple matter of *proving* that science can be fun—at least, that's the approach the NIEHS is taking with its Kids' Page, located at <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/kids.htm>.

Currently, the Kids' Page logs approximately 1,000 visitors each month, and attendance is growing. Marcia Soward, management systems and policies coordinator in the NIEHS's Office of Management, created and maintains the site. The Kids' Page was developed shortly before a presidential memorandum entitled Expanding Access to Internet-based Educational Resources for Children, Teachers, and Parents was issued on 19 April 1997, asking all government Web sites to incorporate or increase children's educational materials on their sites by October 1997.

The Kids' Page has something for all age groups of children, and pulls in resources from all over the Internet, as well as taking advantage of institute staffers' ability to mix fun and science. The Read All about It link takes readers to articles on intriguing environmental health topics such as cloning and the mysterious rash of frog deformities that were first discovered by Minnesota schoolchildren in 1995. The NIEHS . . . What's up with That link tells kids about the institute and what kind of work is done there. This link also leads to the on-line version of the institute's recently published *Environmental Diseases from A to Z* pamphlet. The Getting Your Own Lab Coat link, authored in part by Dick Sloane, a researcher at the institute, describes what different kinds of scientists do, and tells youngsters what's involved in someday becoming a scientist. This page also includes links to NIEHS-related research sites such as a page describing the institute's

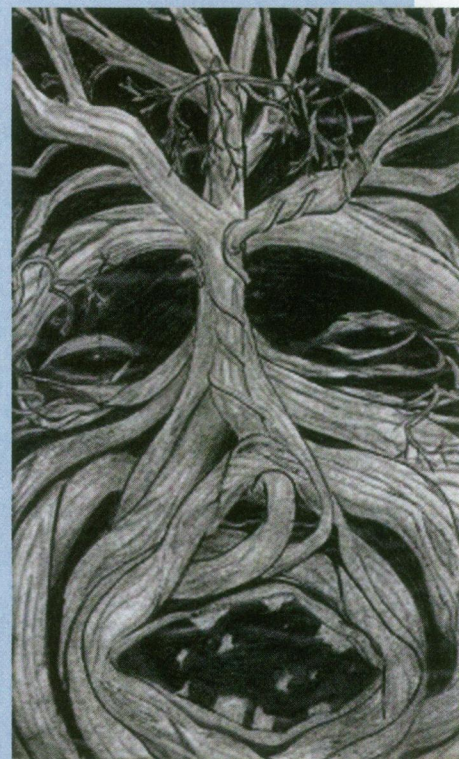
use of alternative methods for toxicology testing. Finally, Links to More Fun leads to other fun science-related sites, including pages on colors, comets, and microscopy.

These Pictures links lead to a mixed bag of games, from charting your own biorhythms, to watching virtual fireworks, to manipulating three-dimensional images of chemical models. There are also lots of word puzzles and brainteasers designed to help kids learn to think more creatively. After all, as the page says, "NIEHS scientists always need to think creatively in order to discover new ways to identify and treat environmentally caused health problems." There's even a video game in which the object is to keep a hapless river rafter from crashing into barrels of toxic waste.

Say, can you imagine a world with no hypothetical situations? Hmmm . . . The Laugh It Up link contains science-related jokes, riddles, and "funny thoughts," many of which were contributed by NIEHS employees or their own kids. The Let's Go to a Party link guesses how various historical scientists and inventors might respond to a party invitation (Samuel Morse's reply: "I'll be there on the dot. Can't stop now—must dash!") and offers links that let kids investigate these scientific celebrities and their famous discoveries. The Color Our World Bright & Beautiful link lets kids "color" on-line, while the Environmental Art Gallery showcases drawings by talented young artists.

Kids aren't the only visitors to the NIEHS Kids' Page. The site has won a number of Internet awards, including Design World Internet Service's Voyager Bronze Award, the Artistic Reality Web Productions' Cool Reality Award, and the Bonus Network's Bonus.com Award.

Susan M. Booker



Broke Adkinson, Lassiter High School, Marietta, Georgia

## Brainteasers & Riddles



**Think more creatively  
and have fun too!**

The Games & Surprises, Brainteasers, Science Word Scrambles, Science Spelling Bee, and What's Wrong with